

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



European Union Military Staff

Official document of the European External Action Service

of 9/1/2019

EEAS Reference	EEAS(2019) 18 Part A
Classification	RESTRAINT UE/EU RESTRICTED
To	All Military Representatives Political and Security Committee CSDP/PSDC, EEASDOC, COMAG, COMED, PESC
Title / Subject	EUNAVFOR MED Op SOPHIA - Six Monthly Report 1 JUN 2018 - 30 NOV 2018

On behalf of EUNAVFOR MED Op SOPHIA Operation Commander, please find attached the EUNAVFOR MED Op SOPHIA Six Monthly Report from 1 JUN 2018-30 NOV 2018.

**EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHIA**

*Via di Centocelle, 301
00175 Roma - ITALIA*

Rome,

Prot. n.

To: General [REDACTED]
Chairman of the European Union Military Committee
Avenue de Cortenbergh, 115
BE-1040 Brussels

Info: Mr. [REDACTED]
Deputy Secretary General of EEAS
EEAS Building, 9A Round Point Schuman
1046 Brussels - Belgium

Lt. Gen [REDACTED]
Director General of the European Union Military Staff
Avenue de Cortenbergh, 150
BE-1040 Brussels

Enclosure: 1

Subject: EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHIA Six Monthly Report.

[REDACTED]
please find enclosed the Six Monthly Report covering the period
1 June – 30 November 2018. I look forward to briefing the Member States on the contents of the
report.

[REDACTED]
Rear Admiral, Italian Navy
EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA
Operation Commander



EUNAVFOR MED OPERATION SOPHIA SIX MONTHLY REPORT

Reporting Period: 01 June 2018 – 30 November 2018

Executive Summary

ENFM has continued to deliver as a leading **maritime security contributor**, at sea and from the sea in the Central Mediterranean region, with increasing effect. As such, it is important to recognize the contribution of this operation against the backdrop of the **fragile regional situation** and the **limited Libyan capacity** to control and secure its equities ashore and at sea.

In countering the illicit activities, the **presence** of naval assets **in the high seas** has been crucial to: effectively deter the human smugglers by denying them the freedom of maneuver in the high seas and limiting their activity in the Libyan territorial waters; to effectively implement the UN arms embargo (ENFM is the only international actor implementing the UNSCR); and to collect relevant information on oil smuggling.

The Central Mediterranean has seen an **83% reduction in migration flow** in comparison to the previous year. Activities carried out at sea and from the sea by Operation SOPHIA have contributed to this, including through the training of LCG&N (so far **325** Libyan Coast Guard and Navy personnel have been **trained**). The **deterritorial presence**, combined with effective action when necessary, has contributed directly to countering illicit activities such as human smuggling and trafficking, arms trafficking and oil smuggling in the high seas. This **direct action** has been significantly complemented by the training and monitoring tasks. This **indirect action** in the framework of capacity building of the LCG&N has allowed for the delivery of effect in the Libyan areas of responsibility, including Libyan territorial waters where only the LCG&N can act. Furthermore, since July 2018, the **relationship** between **internal/external security actors** has reached a higher level of effectiveness, following the set-up of the Crime Information Cell (CIC) onboard the ENFM flagship.

All the above has been recognized in the second **report** on the **"progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings"** sent last 3 December from the EU Commission to the European Parliament and the Council.

The **relevance** of the key role of **ENFM** as a maritime security provider in the region is **recognized** not only at EU level but also at international level. During recent talks in the US, the State Department and Department of Defense senior management have acknowledged not only the impressive results achieved by the Operation in terms of action and deterrence at sea, but also in terms of effective contribution to LCG&N capacity building, and consequently - in broader terms - to the Libyan stabilization process.

The last six months have been characterized by a **positive upward trend** of LCG&N capacity to fulfill their institutional tasks at sea in their areas of responsibility. This, combined with a reduced presence of NGO vessels in the area, has led to the LCG&N acting more effectively and increasing their capacity to control (in the western part of the country) their TTW and SAR area. The high incidence of LCG&N interventions when migrant boats take to the sea has enabled the rescue of more migrants at sea, whilst also contributing to reduce the number of deaths at sea. This **improved capacity of LCG&N** to intervene on the scene in a timely manner, combined with the EUNAVFOR MED naval presence in the high seas, has achieved a **twofold result**: on one hand, it has hampered the smugglers business through a deterrent effect and with a related impact on their profits from illegal activity. On the other hand it has discouraged migrants from using this route to reach Europe.

The combination of a reduced migratory flow and an increased LCG activity at sea has allowed **ENFM** to adapt its **tactics** in the use of naval and air assets in fulfilling its **CORE** task of contributing to the disruption of smugglers business model: the presence of **naval assets** (operating at a distance from the TTW) continue to provide surveillance and deterrence, whilst intervening as necessary such as the inspection on board M/V BARHOM (flag Tanzania) departed from Al-Khoms (Libya) and inspected on 13 August by the IE Lé James Joyce). Meanwhile **air assets** (operating near the Libyan TTW), **complement** the naval presence, contributing to the early detection of migrants boats, and passing the information to the **relevant MRCC authorities** (including Libyan MRCC when this is appropriate) through the Force Headquarters onboard the Flagship. Both naval and air assets remain ready to intervene in the case of SOLAS events.

The positive results achieved in the last 18 months by the LCG&N belie the continued fragility of their situation, and the **LCG&N need to be sustained** not only with the **presence** of a maritime security provider in the area (contributing to shared maritime situational awareness) but also with **training, equipment and maintenance**.

In addition to the **training**, ENFM now needs to recommence **monitoring** ashore without further delay. This activity was suspended in May for both administrative and security issues. In line with PSC guidance, ENFM conducted a site survey in Tripoli in November, which has informed work on the long-term plan for monitoring ashore. which will soon be presented to Member States.

Training and monitoring tasks must be carried out in synergy with other EU and bilateral initiatives. In this regard, ENFM cooperation with EUBAM Libya (including through the Maritime Sub Working Group) is highly important, as is the cooperation with the EU Commission and the Italian MOI (who are responsible for the implementation of the EU trust fund dedicated to the Libya border management) and all the other stakeholders participating in the project "Support to Integrated Border and Migration Management in Libya": ENFM continue to be ready to act as a focal point for the monitoring and training of the LCG&N.

The Crime Information Cell has ably demonstrated its added value to the operation and of the concept to other CSDP missions more broadly. Not only is it effective in counter-human smuggling activity, but also in the implementation of the arms embargo and counter-oil smuggling task. Apart from an enhanced tailored exchange of information with EUROPOL and FRONTEX, the Crime Information Cell has also facilitated engagement with the national law enforcement authorities of EU MS where suspect ships were headed. The information passed to those authorities triggered (on an autonomous basis and in full respect of respective institutional mandates) further inspections of suspect vessels ashore. The effectiveness of the mechanism demonstrates the efficacy of combined internal and external EU action against organized crime, when suitable cooperation is enabled between CSDP mission/operations and JHA agencies. A joint report issued on 14 November by EUNAVFOR MED with FRONTEX and EUROPOL was presented to the PSC/COSI on 23 November. The two committees welcomed the report, recognising the results achieved and noting the suggested next steps, including to maintain the Crime Information Cell onboard the flagship at the end of the trial period (5 January 2019). A decision from Member States is expected in this regard before the end of the year.

The exchange of information with relevant partners remain an important component in countering illicit activities and organized crime at sea and from the sea. The last six months, in addition to EUROPOL and FRONTEX interaction, have been characterized by enhanced, productive discussion and interaction with the UN Panel of Experts, which will soon culminate in the signing of an arrangement aimed at enhancing our information exchange with UN colleagues. Similarly, ENFM relationships with the shipping industry has been very positive, including ICS and IMO. During the semester the Operation and the ICS organized the second inter-sessional workshop, hosted by the German ship-owner association Verband Deutscher Reeder, in Hamburg on 19 September to enhance mutual understanding of specific topics of interest to the industry, including on search and rescue cooperation and co-ordination in the Central Mediterranean. The first inter-sessional meeting was organized in London on 19 April 2018: those kinds of events, alternate with the working groups organized during the SHADE MED forum in accordance with a jointly (ICS-EUNAVFOR MED) roadmap, enhancing and strengthening a relationship aimed at a mutual and effective understanding.

The Shared Awareness and De-confliction in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED) forum continues to be a key element to enhance interaction and develop synergies in the overall framework of operations in the Mediterranean between civilian and military actors.

The VI edition of SHADE MED was conducted in Rome on 19-20 June, under the theme of 'Connecting Capabilities and Awareness in the Mediterranean. 242 delegates attended from 127 organisations: this represents the largest and most diverse SHADE MED to date, confirming that the operation is internationally well recognized. Along with the SHADE MED forum a **High Level Seminar on Gender-Mainstreaming** was held on 19 June with the intention of exchanging views on how to further enhance gender mainstreaming in Military Missions. Next 23 and 24 January the 7th SHADE MED conference will take place in Rome.

EUNAVFOR MED was born as an **emergency response** to a humanitarian crisis. Today SOPHIA is a key component of an **EU integrated response** to tackle migration and to contribute to the stabilization of Libya.

It is relevant to underline that the international community recognizes the existence of a criminal network that take illicit benefits from several criminal activities (such as human smuggling/trafficking, oil smuggling, arms trafficking and drugs smuggling) among them interlinked. In this regard, the increased effectiveness of the LCG in their areas of responsibility not limited in rescuing people but also engaged in fighting illicit activities in their territorial waters, combined with the presence of a maritime force able to act and deter as necessary in the high seas, is promising in countering effectively the organized crime in Libya.

In spite of the successes achieved, an estimated **600,000 people of concern** remain in Libya, as reported by UNHCR and IOM. It is further estimated that half of this population group could embark on the unsafe journey through the Mediterranean Sea if the conditions ashore in Libya change again. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain our attention in this region and a **naval presence in the area** – one that is capable of enforcing the rule of law and the freedom of navigation in the high seas, while contributing to the **capacity building** of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy, and consequently to the **stabilization** of Libya in a broader sense.

Global context**Migration trends**

During the reporting period the overall irregular migration across the Mediterranean decreased on the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR, North Africa to Malta and Italy), the Western Mediterranean Route (WMR, from North West Africa to Spain) and the Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR, from Turkey to Greece) as shown in figures 1 and 2.

During the reporting period, **6,694** migrants crossed through the CMR, of which **75%** were male, **7%** female and **18%** minors. In the previous semester **12,697** crossed the CMR while in the same semester in 2017 **53.246**.

During the reporting period, Tunisia has been the main country of origin of migrants (2,169 = 32%), followed by Eritrea (1,062 = 16%), Algeria (12%), Sudan (8%), Nigeria (3%), Ivory Coast (3%), Guinea (3%) and several other nationalities (23%).

Although not part of ENFM's mandate and further to the decreasing trend recorded in the past 12/18 months, during the reporting period Operation Sophia was directly involved in **1 SOLAS** event with IE unit LÉ SAMUEL BECKETT, compared to 19 events attended in the previous reporting period, rescuing a total of **106 migrants** (minus 95 % in comparison with the 2,155 in the previous reporting period). When compared to the same six-month reporting period in 2017, the number of migrants rescued at sea by ENFM has dropped by 98% (from 5,542 to 106).

NGO vessels continued to operate in the area off the coast of Western Libya but in limited numbers. During the reporting period, there was an average of one vessel operating at any given time, often close to Libyan territorial waters. Figures confirm a negative trend started in the second semester 2017 when an average of two NGO vessels was active throughout the AOO.

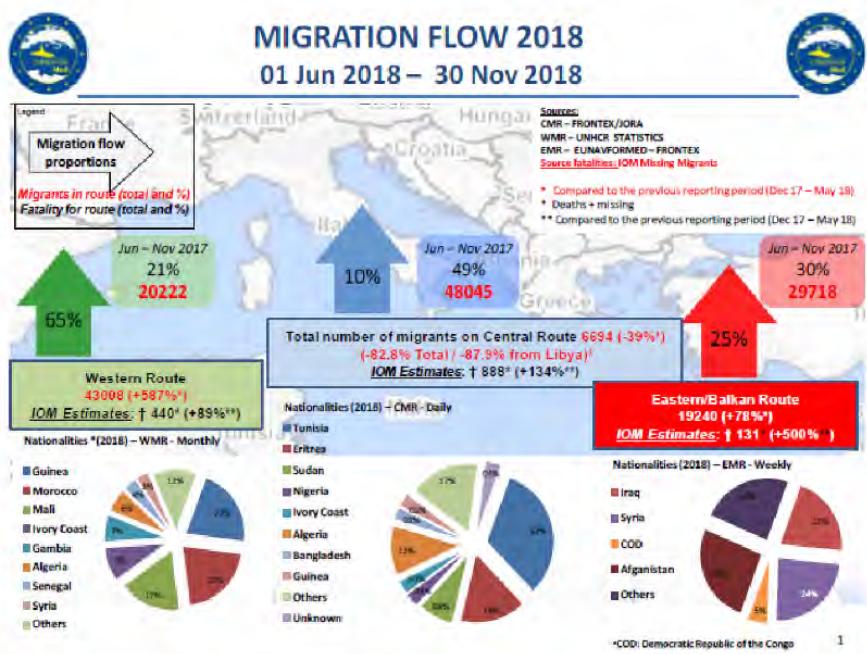


Figure 1- Migration Flow, Mediterranean Sea (1st of June 2018 to 30th of November 2018)

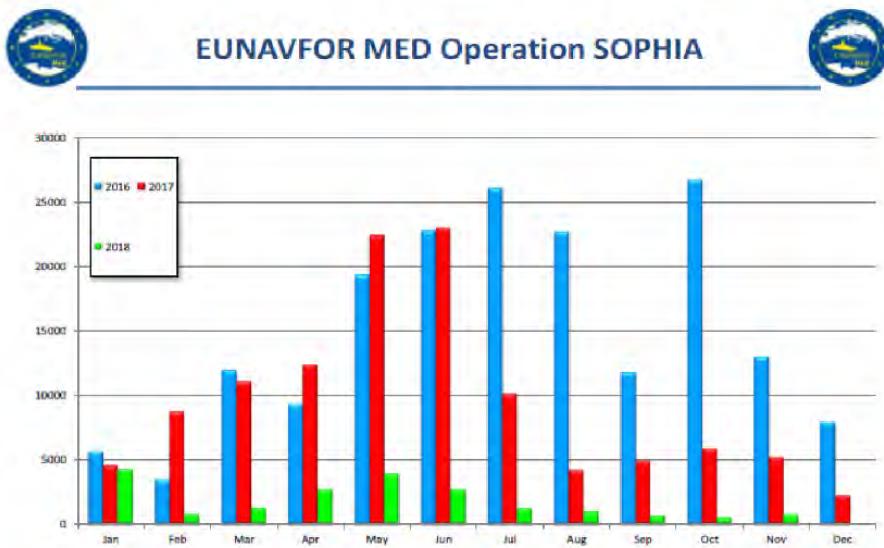


Figure 2 - Migration Flow, Central Mediterranean Route

Smuggling Business Model

Smugglers Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP)

The SBM has been heavily influenced by the presence in the high sea of ENFM naval and air assets, combined with the presence of the LCG&N in their areas of responsibility. Less than 19,000 irregular migrants have reached Europe so far this year through the Central Mediterranean Route (which corresponds to a 82.7% reduction since 2017).

During the reporting period, Libya continues to be the main departing country for migration from Africa towards Europe with more than 3,400 migrants arriving in Italy, representing almost 50% of the arrivals through the CMR. Arrivals in Italy from Tunisia through the CMR counts more than 2,200 migrants, approximately 33% of the overall CMR flow during the reporting period.

Throughout the reporting period, the main departure regions in Libya have been Abu Kammash – Zuwarah and Al Khums – Garabulli. Departures have been divided evenly between these two regions, with the main difference being that Abu Kammash – Zuwarah region is more often used for launching fiber glass or wooden boats and most of the rubber boats have been launched from Al Khums – Garabulli.

Human smugglers Techniques, Tactics and Procedures (TTPs) have evolved over time, adjusting to the current situation. Since the beginning of OP SOPHIA, six different TTPs for human smugglers in Libya have been detected (figure 3). The most recent TTP has been witnessed during the whole reporting period, beginning from June 2018, after Libyan SRR was published. This TTP is characterized by migrant boats trying to reach Europe independently without making a distress call and, if this is not possible, to travel as far north as possible prior to making a distress call in order to prevent LCG&N to intervene to rescue the migrants.

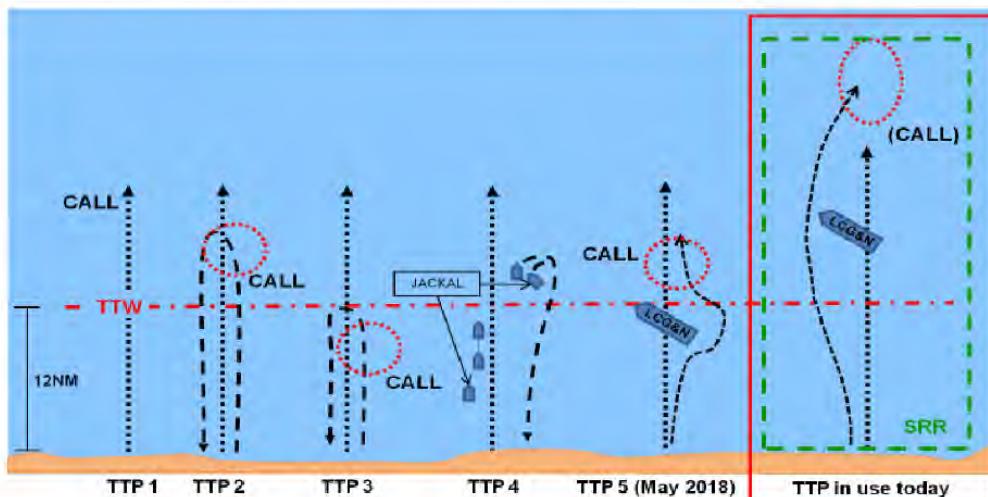


Figure 3 - Human smugglers Techniques, Tactics and Procedures (TTPs)

Despite the smugglers attempts to use the high sea undetected, the increasingly active countering role of the LCG allow the Libyans to keep its area of responsibility under control, effectively intervening even at a great distance from the coast, up to the northern limit of their SAR region.

This most recently evolved TTP has increased the average distance the migrants cover prior to being intercepted. During the reporting period the average distance from the shoreline has increased from 30 NM to 125 NM (figure 4), as smugglers have instructed the migrants to get as far from shore as possible - in some cases even reaching Lampedusa or Malta.



Figure 4 - Average distance covered by migrants prior the interception

The transhipment of migrants from fishing vessels (FV) is another method utilised to reach Europe. This example of transhipment from Libya - in which migrants transfer to smaller wooden boats - usually occurs close to Lampedusa. Human smugglers are likely increasing their use of FVs due to the shelter provided for migrants by these vessels, which ensure a covert transhipment and reduce the likelihood of detection, but also due to the worsening weather condition which discourages small crafts from sailing using the existing TTP.

Arms trafficking

The presence of the ENFM assets in international waters continues to have a deterrent effect and limit smugglers and traffickers to freely use the high sea as their main route. Therefore, ENFM is seen as the only international actor implementing the arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya.

ENFM has been continuously monitoring Vessels of Interest (VOI) related to the Countering Illegal Arms Trafficking (CIAT). During the reporting period, two boardings have been successfully conducted (while in the preceding reporting period no boarding was conducted). It should be noted that the capacity to corroborate the "reasonable grounds" necessary to carry out inspections has been significantly enhanced by the Crime Information Cell, noting that when the

threshold for the "reasonable grounds" is not satisfied due a lack of intelligence information, the Operation can only rely on friendly approach or hailing.

Oil smuggling

During the previous reporting period, the Investigations Department of the Attorney General's Office of Libya had stated that fuel is smuggled from the port of Zawiyah using modified fishing vessels. Fuel is then transferred onto other vessels and transported to other countries. Another Modus Operandi (MO) is for fuel to be smuggled from Zawiyah all the way to Zuwarah through small fishing vessels to larger carriers further out at sea.

In May 2018 the Libyan Fuel and Gas Crisis Committee (FAGCC) announced that it had concluded its survey of sites used for fuel smuggling in the south of Libya. This followed another survey of sites in western Libya. According to the satellite images provided, the sites used for fuel smuggling are located in the city of Sebha. Photo captions (figure 5) showing trucks illegally transporting fuel were also displayed. Such photos showed that fuel is concealed with other cargo during the transportation.



Figure 5 – Oil Smuggling in the city of Sebha

On 8 May 2018 the FAGCC published a list of 93 fuel stations in western and southern Libya that were being prohibited from resupplying.

During that same period, following complaints about fuel shortages and investigations against the CEOs of the four distribution companies and a number of Libyan Government officials, the Brega Petroleum Marketing Company (BPMC) started publishing daily sales of refined products to the four distribution companies on their official website. In a sample of the published sales it was

noted that particular petrol stations, had quite a high demand for Petrol 95 when compared to other petrol stations often exceeding the permissible daily quota. It is possible that certain fuel stations could be involved in the smuggling of fuel in large quantities. It is also possible that certain fuel stations could be supplying fuel to the smuggling organizations in order to achieve their desired end state for the smuggling business model.

In the UN Panel of Experts on Libya report dated 5 September 2018, Annex 51 stated that in the Zuwarah area there are three pumping stations, located on the coast between Zuwarah and Abu Kammash supplying oil products to smuggling ships. This report provided the locations and satellite images of these pumping stations (figure 6). By comparing the images of the smuggling pumping stations as presented in the UN Panel of Experts to Libya report (Sept 2018) with updated satellite imagery (figure 7), it is evident that at least two of the three pumping stations are no longer operational. While no significant changes were observed at Abu Kammash, which appears to be a facility of a permanent nature, the other two locations show significant changes. Marsa Tiboda retains the perimeter wall around the site but three of the four small structures within it have since been removed and Sidi Ali shows the most drastic change with all structures including the perimeter wall being removed.



Figure 6 - Smugglers' pumping stations as shown in UN Panel of Experts on Libya report (Sep 18)



Figure 7 – EU SATCEN information as of 30th October 2018

It is likely that the owners of these pumping stations are aware of the publicity of the locations of their smuggling business and therefore it is likely that they took measures to protect their interests. Being a highly lucrative business, it is unlikely that these networks have stopped their illicit activities related to oil smuggling and therefore it is assessed that it is possible that these pumping stations have been moved elsewhere along the coast.

It seems that most of the oil smuggling businesses are situated in the western part of Libya, between Zawiyah and Abu Kammash.

Libyan Coast Guard and Navy (LCG&N)

LCG&N confirms its key role in the stabilization and handling of the migration phenomenon, by contributing effectively to deterring human smuggling activities and by managing operations ashore and at disembarkation points in a progressively effective manner.

LCG&N has confirmed the ability to operate up to 90/100 NM from the coast, during both day and night conditions, as single units or in multi-ship patrols with sea states up to 3 (0,5m-1,25m wave height), thereby significantly contributing to saving lives at sea. LCG&N C2 has shown a growing capability of coordinating several vessels and several events and based on own observations and reporting, that LCG&N is capable of successfully managing up to 5 major SOLAS/SAR events consecutively involving up to 500 people (Figure 8).

DATE	SAR EV. NO.	FIRST DETECT.	TYPE OF BOAT	NO. PERSONS	LCG ASSET	DIST. FM. COAST (Nm)
2018.07.01	516/518	ENFM A/A	rubber	835	Zwara	36
2018.07.01	520/521	IMRCCSATP	rubber		Zwara	62
2018.07.01	517/519	ENFM A/A	rubber	41	Zwara	26
2018.07.03	523/524	IMRCCSATP	rubber	123	Al Jaddar	16
2018.07.12	551/553	ENFM A/A	rubber	100	Ras Al Jaddar	46
2018.07.12	557	UNK	wooden	8	Ras Al Jaddar	70
2018.07.13	559	IMRCCGSM	wooden	25	Talib	28
2018.07.16	H02	ENFM A/A	rubber	165	Ras Al Jaddar	83
2018.07.16	H01	ENFM A/A	rubber	158	Gammies	17
2018.07.18	570	ENFM A/A	rubber	150	Gammies	37
2018.07.21	0578/0580	ENFM A/A	wooden	40	Sabratha	56
2018.07.22	0582	IMRCCGSM	rubber	116	Sabratha	30
2018.07.26	0680	IMRCCSATP	wooden	81	Sabratha	73
2018.07.30	0608	ENFM A/A	rubber	60	Sabratha	52
2018.07.30	0609/0613	ENFM A/A	rubber	130	Sabratha	43
2018.07.30	0610	NGO A/A	rubber	120	Ras Al Jaddar	42
2018.07.30	0612	NGO A/A	rubber	120	Ras Al Jaddar	28
2018.07.30	0613	NGO A/A	rubber	100	Ras Al Jaddar	43
TOTAL	18			1720		

Figure 8 – LCG&N SOLAS – Events on 30 July 2018

Currently, LCG&N inventory consists of 29 naval assets. Six of these vessels are operated by LN with the remaining units under LCG control. Total availability levels are 45% (10 out of 23 vessels) for LCG and 85% (5 out of 6 vessels) for LN. The most capable ships belong to the IT-built Bigliani class (4 assets, 75% operational) and to the IT-built Corrubia class (2 assets, 100% operational) similar to the Bigliani class. The number of sorties, performed by the LCG observed by ENFM, peaked to an average of 10 per week during summer while in the latter part of the reporting